

Washington, D.C. 20505

14 December 1979

The Honorable Harold Brown
Secretary of Defense
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Harold,

I have reviewed your letter of 3 November expressing your views on the proposed APEX special access control system. In accordance with your request, my staff has been working with Dan Murphy's people to modify the APEX report to accommodate your concerns. We have reached mutual agreement on amendments to satisfy all of your concerns save that on the right to establish access standards for the special access programs.

In essence, the last position we have received from Dan confines the DCI to a purely advisory role in establishing standards of access. Until that, I had hoped to avoid raising the issue. If the many agencies involved are reasonable in establishing their own access standards, we will never have to grapple with this problem. Dan's revision to this proposal, however, is unsatisfactory to me for several reasons:

a. E.O. 12065 clearly gives the DCI authority to establish "...security and access standards for managing and handling foreign intelligence..."

b. Much more importantly, it seems essential to me that someone be in charge of the APEX program and this aspect of it in particular. It is not only Defense and CIA that have to establish access standards, but State, Treasury, Justice, FBI, OMB, NSC, etc. The system will degenerate into chaos and least denominator standards if someone is not able to adjudicate differences that may arise in the way various agencies and departments grant access.

c. A point which Dan made to me on your behalf was that you could not accept someone else having control over the persons to whom you can grant clearances. I certainly understand this.

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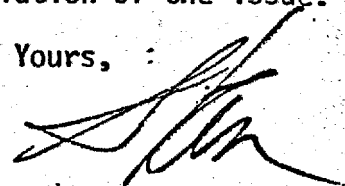
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Never have I proposed or, under the present system, exercised the right to determine which individuals will be granted clearances in any agency or department other than the CIA. On the other hand, if it is the setting of standards and numbers of total clearances that concern you, I can only suggest that if differences should arise in this area it would not be very different from occasions when we have differences of view regarding my authorities for tasking national intelligence assets or establishing the National Foreign Intelligence Program budget. In those cases, where my authority is also explicit, procedures exist for the resolution of differences. I would anticipate that the same procedures would apply to the resolution of differences regarding standards of access. I would also suggest that the interests of DoD are much less involved in the question of access standards than they are in the operation of national intelligence collection systems and the establishment of national intelligence budgets.

d. Dan's proposed wording in effect walks away from the authority I have been explicitly exercising since June 1977 and which DoD, in the form of correspondence from Charles Duncan, has explicitly recognized as my legitimate responsibility.

I sincerely believe that the differences between us on this topic have been magnified by overstaffing. I am sure that we both want a workable system and one that protects each of our capabilities to perform our assigned tasks in mutual support of each other. As a result of the meeting today chaired by David Aaron, I am submitting to the NSC a statement of my views on the question of control of access standards for special access programs. Upon receipt of a statement of your views on this subject, the NSC Staff will then prepare the necessary papers to secure Presidential resolution of the issue.

Yours,



STANSFIELD TURNER

cc: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence
Under Secretary of State for
Political Affairs
Deputy Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs
Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for
Policy Review

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